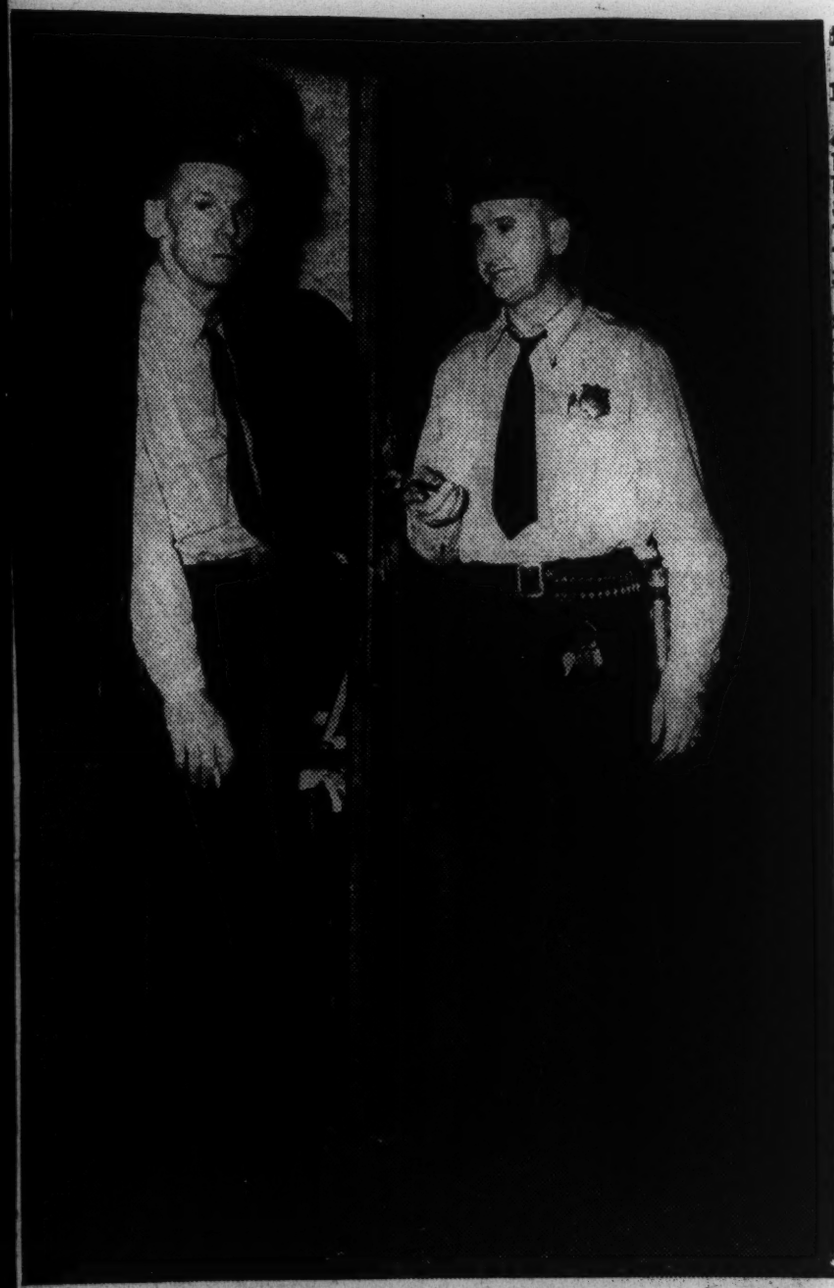

OFFICERS DISARM NEGRO—Officer C. M. Robbins, left, and his partner, H. B. George, are shown above after they had rushed into a Negro house, just off Fifth Alley, North, between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets, to disarm a Negro woman, who had been shooting up the neighborhood. George is shown with the revolver which, he said, the woman snapped at him at close range.

Veteran Birmingham Officer Braves Death To Disarm Woman

H. B. George Escapes As Gun Misses Fire; 'All In Day's Work,' He Smiles

Because a Negro woman made the mistake of loading a .38 caliber pistol with .32 caliber cartridges, Police Officer H. B. George today "lived to tell the story."

But even considering the mechanical miscalculation made by the woman, it was nothing short of miraculous that Officer George lived to tell about it.

At a distance of one foot from the officer the Negro woman clicked the trigger of the loaded gun three times, but it failed to fire, although previously she had "shot up" and terrorized a Negro section with the same cartridge-gun combination, the officers said.

Yet today Officer George termed it "all in a day's work."

The woman, Bazela Erwin, 60, was placed in the Southside Jail.

When Officer George and his radio patrol car buddy, C. M. Robbins, answered a call to the section between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets, near Fifth Alley, North, they found the Erwin woman in the doorway of her home, the pistol in her hand.

As Officer George approached from the front while his buddy approached from the rear of the house, the woman turned the gun on George and pulled the trigger three times. But nothing happened.

The officer made no attempt to draw his own gun.

The woman already had fired several shots indiscriminately at pedestrians and threatened to "shoot up the whole block."

The incident last night, however, was not the first time Officer George has faced death. Several years ago a Negro fired a shotgun at him at close range.

The policeman's philosophy about such incidents: "No use getting unduly excited about those things; they're all in a day's work for a policeman."

OFFICER TAKES GUN CLICKING AT HIM

(From Yesterday's Final Edition)

Police Officer H. B. George, with his partner, C. M. Robbins, close behind, rushed into a Negro house shortly before 10 o'clock last night and disarmed the Negro woman, whose blazing revolver had terrorized a Negro section between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets just off Fifth Alley, North.

As other officers rushed to the scene in patrol cars, Officer George took the revolver away from the woman after she had unsuccessfully attempted to fire the gun while holding it about a foot from his body, he said.

The officer, who did not fire himself, said the woman's pistol did not fire because she was using a .32 caliber cartridge in a .38 caliber "owlhead" revolver. Before he arrived on the scene, however, she had managed to shoot about a dozen .32 caliber cartridges from the gun, he said.

Most of the shots were fired inside her house. George said the woman told him "a bunch of folks were trying to break in."

The woman, Bazela Erwin, 60, was docketed as "demented, hold for warrant."

To Ask State For $634,000 To Expand Insane Hospital

GOLDSBORO, N. C. (ANP)—Requests for $634,794 to complete the safety and expansion program of the State Hospital for the colored insane here have been approved by the board of trustees of the hospital, and the next legislature will be asked to appropriate that amount.

New buildings planned include a $200,000 three-story, 300-bed building; a $125,348 three-story, 143-bed dormitory for male patients to replace the condemned Aycock and McKinney Buildings; a $125,933 three-story, 212-bed building to replace the old epileptic building; fireproofing the Miller Building for female patients; electric generating equipment, a new boiler, and other power plant equipment, costing $113,500.

A million-dollar State PWA program of expansion and improvement has recently been completed at the hospital.

Care of Negro Mental Patients Lags Behind

NOV 22 1940

By Dr. W. L. Silcott

"Let us define mental health as the ability of human beings to adjust to themselves and to their surroundings with the maximum of efficiency and happiness." This, according to Menninger, constitutes the healthy mind.

It is obvious that there are millions of men, women and children who fall short of the above definition in varying degrees. Besides, there is much difference in the methods employed and the results obtained. When, however, the business of adjustment is too poorly handled, the individual becomes a menace to himself or to society. He is then adjudged insane, and may be forced to accept assistance.

The term insanity is a legal one. It implies that the individual is no longer capable of taking proper care of himself and his property. While it implies lack of responsibility, it does not, however, specify that treatment is necessary.

Furthermore, it is clear that this does not take care of all the mentally ill, who for various reasons (social, economic, racial, etc.), are afflicted with varying degrees of mental strain. The few who are acutely ill present peculiar manifestations of behavior which to the general public are very likely to be bewildering, disturbing or annoying.

To the trained physicians, however, such manifestations are very revealing. Like the chills and fever of malaria, they tell of the mental strain and unapproved methods employed as the individual struggles to maintain a hold on his personality. It is at such times that a genuine understanding and experienced hand is necessary to guide the individual back along socially-approved paths. One of the main reasons for the personal neglect of mental health treatment may be found in the fact that mental hospitals in the past were "shut in" from the general public.

Mental disease is more common than physical disease, and almost invariably is an accompanist of the latter. But mental disease requires the attention of medical men specially trained in its treatment. This makes a mental unit as part of each general hospital an absolute necessity. Among Negro hospitals, however, a mental unit is somewhat of a rarity. Not even such great Negro institutions as Howard and Meharry boast a unit of their own. Besides, Negro doctors are not given a place on the staff of the state hospitals.

It might be interesting to note that psychiatrists and allied workers are not the only ones engaged in developing and maintaining mental health. In the past, religion and medicine stood on common ground. Even today, certain theological seminaries have rediscovered the necessity for at least a basic understanding of psychiatric principles in their field. On the other hand, psychiatry has always recognized the influence of moral and religious factors in personality development.

Paradoxically, however, while the number of churches has tremendously increased in Negro communities, facilities for scientific inquiries into the development, preservaton or restoration of mental health are practically non-existent. The state of overcrowding which exists in state hospitals today is common knowledge.

It needs no great stretch of the imagination to perceive that treatment, at best, must be inadequate, even pitiable, where Negroes are concerned. The Committee for the Development of Psychiatric Hospitals and Mental Hygiene Resources for Negroes is one of the great organizations that have sensed these deplorable conditions and is prepared to initiate steps to remedy it. It is prepared to accept contributions from members and friends of the race in order to carry out this program.

These contibutions may be sent directly to the chairman of the Committee (Dr. T. P. Brennan, 52 Sterling avenue, White Plains, N. Y.), or to the treasurer (Dr. R. Hernandez, Elm Hill road, Nashville, Tenn). We cannot afford to let such a golden opportunity slip through our fingers.

The establishment of an institution where Negro patients afflicted with mental disease may be sympathetically and scientifically assisted to recover their mental health would be one of the greatest blessings to the Negro race. Its own members can then share in the development and restoration of God's highest gift to mankind, "A mind capable of carrying on normal intellectual functions." No race can transcend its intellectual achievement. Let us, therefore, aim to build a race of mentally healthy men and women; and let us begin now.

Insanity -1940

Raleigh, N. C., News & Observer
August 15, 1940

$634,000 IS REQUE FOR COLORED HO

Amount Is Sought t plete Safety and Ex Program at Goldsb

Goldsboro, Aug. 14.—Requests $634,794 to complete the safety and expansion program of the State Hospital for the colored insane at Goldsboro have been approved by the board of trustees of the hospital. The next legislature will be asked to appropriate that amount.

This is to cover needs for the next two years and includes complete fireproofing of buildings at the institution and the expenditure of $451,283 for new fireproof buildings, with bed capacity of 655, which is thought to be ample for the normal increase expected during the biennium. A million-dollar State-PWA program of expansion and improvement has recently been completed at the hospital.

New buildings planned include a $200,000 three-story, 300-bed building replacing the Vance Building, with 85-bed capacity; a $125,348 three-story, 143-bed dormitory for male patients to replace the condemned Aycock and McKinne Buildings; a $125,933 three-story, 212-bed building to replace the old epileptic building; fireproofing the Miller Building, for female patients, at a cost of $79,011; electric generating equipment, new boiler, and other power plant equipment and improvements at $113,500.

Other small amounts for new silos, addition to the laundry and other minor improvements at a comparatively small cost may also be asked for, R. M. Purser, business manager, said.